1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

29 512

May 26. About the place, playing with her baby.
May 27. Went to barter with other women at Tarongen, taking the baby with her.
May 28. Worked in the new taro garden.

The records of the girls are similar to those of the women, they search for shell-fish on the reef, or work in the taro garden, or look after some one's baby, with intervals of doing nothing in particular. The boys spend most of their time fishing, or hunting 'possum, or just playing in the bush, or they may help an older man to shape a dug-out canoe.

512 883

RECKONING OF TIME

The past of these people is enshrined for them in their numerous myths of origin, handed down from one generation to another, and called *wanino wa kāna*, 'stories of long ago'. They are concerned with the doings of culture heroes such as Morena, who instituted their clans, and taught them the arts of life, as described in Chapter II. Tales are also told of successful raids led by great fighting men, who are remembered by name for about two generations back, generally given with the comment: 'They used to eat man.' The era before the white man began to count as a factor in native life (some forty years ago) is sometimes referred to as 'the time of fighting'. The present is 'the time of the white man'.

773 173 [266]

As regards anything more definite than this, it is practically impossible to obtain any real information. The idea of reckoning an interval seems completely foreign to them. When I tried to find out any such thing as how long taro takes to ripen, or how long ago a certain man died, the majority of people would merely gaze at me in puzzled silence, no matter in what form I couched my queries. My most intelligent informant once said, in discussing these matters: 'We people do not know how to count time. We think in our bellies, that's all.' They take up a plant to find how near the taro patch is to being ready for use, they hold ceremonies when they think they have enough food available. A messenger, carrying a branch of areca-nuts, is sent round to the villages that are expected to attend it, and leaves a nut at each, as an indication that it is time to start. In days of old, this signal was also used as a request to join in a fight, either in defence or attack. If they wish to make an appointment to meet at the end of a designated period, say for purposes of barter, one party to the agreement will give

805 [202] 211

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

PREPARATIONS FOR THE *WATAWUTʃ*

881 The *watawutʃ* is considered by far the most important of the three ceremonies connected with the *upi*. It is looked forward to with great eagerness by everybody. In contrast to the *wapi*, it is held in the village, not in the bush, and there is no taboo on the presence of the women, which is, indeed, essential to its success. All the boys who went through the *wapi* ceremony together must attend the same *watawutʃ*. Not to be able to do so is considered a very great misfortune.

881 565 824 ●202 Several months before the ceremony, the *tsunaun* of the village in which it is to be held sends messengers to all the other villages in the group, carrying a number of strips of bamboo about 6 inches long, and a bunch of *win* leaves split into thin strands. A strip of bamboo is left with the *tsunaun* of each village, and one of the *win* strands at each house where there is in the family a boy wearing the *upi*. This is a sign that they must set aside a pig for the *watawutʃ* ceremony. Large areas of bush are cleared and planted with taro, which is also reserved for the *watawutʃ*. The women plant and tend this just as they do taro intended for everyday consumption.

881 346 621 313 824 When the time for the ceremony approaches, preparations are begun for building the 'long house' (*tobar tʃan*) for the novices. The *tsunaun* of the village in which the ceremony is to be held details certain portions of the structure to be provided by the various villages of the group. Special importance is attached to the *pa'i*, the horizontal ridge-poles supporting the roof. These must run the full length of the house, and it is no easy matter to find and bring in poles (consisting of the aerial roots of the banyan) of the required length. Those for the *tobar tʃan* at Kurtatchi, which were brought in while I was there, were provided by the [804] village of Tabut. A length of fibre string had previously been sent from Kurtatchi as an indication of the length required. They measured 65 ft. 8 in.[1] They are brought through the bush by the 881 *upi* boys themselves, assisted by the older men, both *amro* and 313 *kwigin*. All the women must keep out of the way while this is being done. Marotɛ had promised to accompany me on a visit to Ruri 824 on the day when the *pa'i* were brought, but when she heard this was

[1] For the ordinary dwelling-house the *pa'i* would measure not more than about 40 feet.

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

day the women must leave the village at sunrise, and go to the bush or to the shore. They cannot stop in the village while the work is actually in progress, but they may come back at sunset, when the men have ceased working on the hats for the day, and may sleep in their own huts. The *amro* and the *kwigin* attend at the *tobar*; it is their province to make the hats, the duty of the Hahon people being merely to cut the patterns from the red leaves. These village men are allowed to go to their own huts to sleep, and they are not forbidden sexual intercourse with their wives during this period. The *upi* boys, who would normally be sleeping in the *tobar*, must avoid those in which the work is being done, and find themselves quarters elsewhere. The *tumaun* of the village sit in the *tobar* while the work is in progress, but take no part in it. No word must be spoken in the *tobar* while the patterns are being cut out. All the time it is essential that the workers should be well fed, and word is sent to the other villages of the group to bring in pig-meat for the men who are making the hats. The *upi* boys collect large quantities of areca-nut and betel-pepper and coco-nuts for them. The work goes on for several days, until each boy in the group is provided with his special hat. When all are finished, the slit-gong is beaten to let every one know that the making of the hats is over.

A story in my collection, related to me independently of any discussion of the ceremony, is here given as it illustrates the state of tension that prevails in the village at this time:

'The people were busy making the hats for the *watawutf*. Ten men were cutting the patterns for ten hats. A woman went to cut firewood; she came back, and threw her load of firewood on to the ground. All the men in the *tobar* jumped up angrily. They asked: 'Who is that there?' They said to one man: 'You go and see who it is making a noise with a bundle of firewood.' The man went and saw the woman, she had thrown down her load of firewood. The man saw her. He went back into the *tobar* and said: 'It is a woman, she is throwing down a load of firewood.' The men all got up, they were very angry, they broke the patterns they were cutting. A *tumaun* said: 'Go and seize her.' Two men went out and seized her; they pushed her into the *tobar*. They asked her: 'Don't you know this thing is very sacred? You defecate into my hands.' (This was explained to me as meaning: 'You don't know much.') Then all the men had connexion with the woman in the *tobar*. When they had all had connexion with her once, they killed her, and cooked her in a pot in the *tobar* and ate her. Then they cut patterns for the hats a second time, they cut ten. When night came, they lit torches;

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

lime is made from coral, branched coral being preferred.

preparation is the work of the women, and consists of burning the coral with a minimum of slaking. The work is carried on in the recesses of the bush, the place being kept secret and no men permitted to approach it. Large quantities are prepared at a time, at infrequent intervals.

Areca-nut and betel-pepper must be provided in abundance on every ceremonial occasion, and are always given to visitors from other villages to take home with them on their return. Each individual carries his own supply of lime, or begs a dip from his neighbour; it is not provided with the other ingredients. When in his own village the chewer of the betel-mixture will freely fling the skins about on the ground, to be swept up by the women in the course of their cleaning. They are thrown away in any convenient spot, in the case of villages on the cliff top generally over the cliff, or they may be burnt. There does not appear to be any special place for disposing of them, as is described by Ivens (1927, p. 287) for the SE. Solomons. But when on a visit to another village, particularly to one in the mountains, where there is always a feeling that the people are not to be trusted, the skins are carefully put into the little basket which everybody carries, and brought away, lest an enemy should use them for making 'bad medicine'.

Branches of areca-nuts are carried by the messengers sent out by the *tunaun* to summon people to a ceremony. (Cf. Ivens, 1927, p. 288.)

The natives say that chewing the betel-mixture 'makes them feel strong'. I can testify that when they have plenty to chew they are livelier and more inclined to talk. It is known to them that people who chew too much of it are apt to fall into a slightly dazed and stupid condition, and there are a very few who do not like the effect it has upon them and therefore avoid it. The majority, however, obviously feel lost without it, like an inveterate smoker left without tobacco.

STORIES OF THE ORIGIN OF VARIOUS FOODSTUFFS

Among my collection of stories there is a large number explaining how the people came to be possessed of, or to learn to use, certain of their foodstuffs. Many of these turn on the activities of the famous 'two brothers', and are connected with a widespread series extending over a large part of the Pacific (see references in my paper on Folk-tales, 1932, p. 74). As the stories are in most cases

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

their time in securing it, but the methods employed by men and women are, for the most part, distinct and separate, the latter confining themselves to the reefs and rock pools and the shallow water close inshore. The Buka men will venture some distance out into the open sea in the hope of getting a good catch, but the Kurtatchi people do not care to go too far away from the shore, even after the much-prized bonito. 226

As is to be expected in a matter of so much importance, there is a great deal of magic associated with fishing. The various kinds of 'medicine' are considered appropriate to special methods, and will be discussed in reference to these. I do not know of any which is applicable to fishing in general. There are also magical ways of calming the sea before starting out. Of these the following is typical:

Chew the root of *pai'ukes* (*Pennisetum macrostachyum*) with the betel-mixture, and spit it on to the mid-rib of a coco-nut-palm leaf. Plant this leaf on the shore just where a big wave will reach it. The wave will then go back and calm the sea. [824]

The principal methods of fishing practised in this area will now be discussed in some detail.

Bonito fishing

Of all their fishing activities, by far the most important, in the estimation of these people, is bonito fishing. The bonito (*Sarda* sp.) is called *atūx*, a word current throughout all the dialects in this area, and clearly the same as the Polynesian word *'atu* used in Samoa (Hiroa, 1930, p. 124). Near every village along the coast there is a small clearing at a high point, from which a view over the open sea can be obtained. Here a look-out is kept, somewhat spasmodically, for the splashing of water and the circles of sea-birds which mark the presence of a shoal of bonito in pursuit of the small fish (*wobot*, *iō*, *talī*, *osa*, *mamlul*) on which they feed. As soon as any one sees these signs he raises a characteristic yell, which is heard at no other time. The sound instantly sends all the available men and boys in the village scurrying to the place where the canoes are kept. They launch with all speed, and paddle hard to catch up with the shoal before it gets too far away. More often than not they seem to come home empty-handed, but if any fish [192] [202]

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

XI

AESTHETIC ARTS

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Slit-gong (*tui* (P.), *garamuts* (K.)).

534 [208 171] THE slit-gong is the most important of the sound-producing instruments known to these people. It serves not only for dances, but also for conveying information. It is used over the whole of Buka and Bougainville. Those made in the southern parts of Bougainville differ from those made in the north in not having lugs on the ends.

534 773 539 *Origin.* There is a story explaining the origin of the slit-gong and of the rules for its use which runs thus:

There is a bird whose name is *gugurio*. He taught all the people of Sollos how to make the *garamuts*. There is a big tree that has a hole inside, it is called *toras*, the wind blows inside it, the leaves beat against the edge of the hole, it makes a noise just like a *garamuts*. Gugurio told the people to cut down the tree and make a *garamuts* of it. They made it in the bush, they lifted it up and wanted to carry it to the village. They came along carrying it. Gugurio sat on the top of the *garamuts* as the men carried it. He fell down off the *garamuts*, and it hurt his foot, it broke his leg. Now he walks about on one leg.

Gugurio went with all the people to the village. He said to them: 'You people lift up the *garamuts* and put it in front of a certain house. Don't put it in front of just any house, the *garamuts* is the sign of a *tsunaun*, you must put it in front of the house of a *tsunaun*.' All the people heard what he said. 'You people, the *garamuts* must not sound for nothing. When you have plenty of pig and plenty of taro, plenty of food in front of the big house, then you can beat it, it must not sound all the time for no reason.' So they do. When it is time for a dance, or for a big feast, then it sounds. When the people of another village hear it, they know that this village has plenty of food. Then they are cross, and say: 'When will our *garamuts* sound? We have no food, let us go and work in the taro garden.'

That is why the *garamuts* stands in front of the house of a *tsunaun*, it cannot stand at the house of a commoner.

600 *Manufacture.* Slit-gongs are made of hard wood. The name of

[p. 406]

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

this involves some skill on the part of the beaters, and no small amount of muscular energy is also required to give the necessary volume of sound, so that if a *kōma* continues for hours together, as it usually does, several men must take turns at beating the rhythm.

For sending messages only one *garamuts* is used, the largest in the village, which is usually to be found in the portico of the most important *tsunaun*'s house. The sound carries for several miles. I have known people to be recalled to the village by it from a taro garden at least four miles away, and have no doubt that the sound can be heard for much longer distances, given suitable atmospheric conditions.

The method differs from that used with the 'talking drums' of West Africa, which reproduce messages of any kind by means of tonal differences. The slit-gong sends only certain recognized messages, using a kind of Morse code of long and short beats. These signals differ in different localities. A number of those in use on the island of Pororan are given by Gordon Thomas (1931, p. 225). Some of the chief signals in use at Kurtatchi are as follows:

1. Visit of some one of importance:

// // // // // // // // // //

Any one working in the taro garden when this signal is heard at once returns to the village. It is, therefore, used also if the presence, say, of the *tsunaun* is urgently required. It will be used if the report arrives that the District Officer is on his way to the village.

2. To announce the death of a person of rank:

...! ...! ...! ...! ...! ...! .....
! // // ...//

The *garamuts* is not beaten at the death of commoners.

3. At the end of the women's special dance at funerary rites for a *tsunaun*:

//// .. !..!..!..////..!..!..!..////

4. To announce a feast:

//.....!.....!..... .... !.//.//.///////
.....////

5. To announce the end of a feast:

/// ....
! ...!...//...//..//.!.!

[727] 6. To announce the killing of a prisoner of war (to be eaten):

/ // /..// /..// /..//..// /////..//

[484] 7. To collect a party which is to go on a journey at night:

/ ..... //// ..... //// ..... ////

[881] 8. To announce that one of the *upi* ceremonies is to be held:

/// ...../// ...../// ...../// ...../// .....

9. At a certain stage in the girl's puberty ceremony:

/// .. /// .. /// .. /// .. /// ..

10. If a man is angry about something, e.g. if another man 'steals' his wife:

/ ..... /..... / // ..... /

11. To indicate the number of pigs killed for a feast, or the number of strings of ceremonial currency which changed hands at some special occasion, e.g. at marriage, or on account of the building of a new *tobar*. All such quantities are shown by giving one long slow beat for each pig, or string of currency, &c., involved in the transaction.

Other occasions on which the *garamuts* is beaten are as follows:

[47] To call the villagers together for some piece of communal labour, such as cleaning up the coco-nut groves or working on the road.

To announce the completion of a special piece of work, such as the building of a *tobar*.

[68] To announce a punishment by shooting, when a man has committed an offence for which he is sentenced to stand on the beach to be shot at by the other people.

[304] At a certain stage in the process of cicatrization.

[881] At various stages in the preparations for the *watawutf* ceremony.

On one occasion a man had gone into the bush with his dogs to hunt pig. In the evening the dogs returned without him. The *garamuts* was beaten with long slow beats to give him his direction, in case he was lost in the bush.

It is sometimes sounded for no other apparent reason than that the village is happy because there is a plentiful supply of food. One day it was thus beaten because every one had had a feast of bread-fruit.

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

household pets, and calls them by name.[1] They roam about the village or the bush at will, but come morning and evening to their owner's hut to be fed when called. I have frequently seen women and children caressing them, but do not know of any case in which they have been suckled by women, though this may quite possibly occur, as reported from other areas. Village pigs have their ears slit as a mark of identification, and the males are castrated, which is regarded as a means of identifying them when they are caught in the nets meant for wild pigs, though the reason given for carrying out this operation is that they will not be so wild and so likely to run away. (See further discussion of this question in Chapter III.) No attempt is made to breed, but the females have plenty of opportunity of foregathering with bush pigs, so that the supply is maintained in spite of this custom. The litter belongs to the person who owns the mother. Sometimes young pigs are taken over to Baniu to be cared for there, because 'the ground is better for them' there than at Kurtatchi. In this case, when the sow farrows, the Baniu people are given a piglet for their trouble.

On the occasion of a major feast, pigs are contributed by each person concerned in any respect, according to his ability, assessed by the *tsusaus*. Some months before the *watawutf* ceremony was due to be held, Pinari went round to some of the villages whose boys were to take part in it, leaving at every house a short length of bamboo; this was an indication that such a house was to provide a pig for the associated feast, the family would then set aside a certain pig for that purpose.

The pigs belonging to a person of rank are killed at his death to provide food for the people who come to wail.

Wild pigs killed in the bush are the property of the huntsman. If a concerted drive is made with nets, the pigs caught belong to

[1] Some pigs are named after the place they came from, or the person from whom they were obtained. Some are given names reminiscent of events which happened at the time they were born, e.g. 'Kwigin', for a pig born when the *upi* boys were being given food by the *kwigin* (older men) in the bush, prior to the *watawutf* ceremony. Some contain a sly allusion to somebody's personal idiosyncrasy: 'Gurusku', 'Sleeps over his work'; 'Muwapuin', 'Eats herself and gives none away'. Other names refer to a physical peculiarity of the pig: 'Pipipipun', 'One ear cut, one ear not cut'. Not infrequently there is a dig at the white man. One pig was called by the name of a planter whom the natives much disliked, this was intended as an insult. Another was called 'Whiteman'. On inquiring the reason for this, I was told: "The white people give their pigs names of our people, so we called our pig "Whiteman".'

Music, Song, Dance

Music, song, and -- connected to them -- the dance have many 534
peculiarities in the northwestern Solomon Islands. Musical instruments
are present in the form of drums and Panpipes. The drums are hollowed-
out tree trunks that are carefully smoothed off on the outside; the [532]
sound slit is often decorated with carvings in bas relief, especially with
the head that is characteristic for the region or with the whole human
figure. These drums come in various sizes; a few of them are gigantic
specimens:150 centimeters long. As a rule the drums are kept in the
huts; less frequently one sees them outside. The drummer takes the
drumstick in his right hand and beats it, guiding it by the thumb and
index finger of the left hand, in a slow or fast tempo against the side
wall of the drum slightly below the sound slit; this produces a resonance
that is audible at a great distance. Usually several drums are tuned
to various pitches, but I never heard more than four different ones.
The natives know how to use these drums to communicate with their [202] ●
distant neighbors in a comprehensible signal language; but the drums
are also sounded at dances and other festivities. The skill with which
the drummers manipulate their drumsticks is truly astonishing. A
slow measure is followed by short rapid beats, then again a few
measured beats, once again interrupted by an ever-increasing tempo
until finally the beats follow one another so rapidly that they die out
as a single long rumble. When several drums are simultaneously
beaten at this rapid tempo, the sound is earsplitting for musical Euro-
pean ears, but the Solomon Islanders are delectated by it for hours,
and scarcely does one drummer become tired when another one jumps
up to continue the noise.

The Panpipes are produced in various sizes from bamboo canes.
A concert of these pipes does not sound unpleasant. The individual
pipes are tuned according to a certain system; there are some with
a scale of four and others with a scale of six tones. Different pitches
are produced by varying the length and breadth of the reeds--from
the deepest bass to the highest treble. I know no other Melanesian
people that is able in this way to produce a melody that has any claim
to the name "music." I reproduce here a melody, which, however, 533
is always played in harmony. The low range pipes play the individual
chords. Unfortunately I was unable to write down the whole phrase as

3: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1932
ON6 Buka ON6

534 she went to wash in the passage (a cleft in the reef where the sea rolls in). She said: "Do you people think I am going to stay here so that you can see me all day here?" The man said: "My wife, what are you going to do?" The woman said: "Presently I shall do whatever I want to do." The woman went to wash in the passage, her leg came off and floated away. The man said: "What are you doing? You come ashore, and let us go home." "No, I don't want to go home, I want to stay here. All the time you people are cross with me. Do you think I shall come home by and bye? I won't come home. You people beat me all the time!" Now she stayed in the sea. Her joints came loose. Her sister said: "Come, let us two go home." The woman said: "No, I can't go, I am a fish now." The woman cried out: "Oh! Oh! Look! Look what is coming." Her head went down. Her husband swam, he went into the sea, he could not find her. He went and got some areca nuts, he sent them to all the villages.[10] The people of another village came. They made a feast. They all jumped up. They all went to the sea. Then one man swam, he looked for her, he looked and looked. "Oh! I have nearly got her now." Then another man swam, he caught hold of the woman's tail, she was a fish now. He pulled at the tail, it was caught in a stone. Then another man swam, he wanted to take hold of it, he tried to pull it out, but he could not. He could not get her. He hid on the shore, he said to all the people: "You go and look at the woman." They went and looked at her, they all pulled her out and took her to the village. Her husband told all the little boys to go and get coconuts and give them to all the men who had helped him. The fish was dead. The fish was a *tangini* (a fish commonly found on the reef, used as food.)

This story was told by Takel, a small boy, at Kurtatchi. There are several similar ones, differing in detail.

[202] [10] A branch of areca palm with nuts on it is often sent round with an invitation to a feast or a ceremony.

535 The Buka dance or *guma* is an uninteresting spectacle. Unlike other Melanesian dances there is very little action and the [535] accompanying singing is but a constant repetition of "O-a-o-a" in as many keys as the human voice is capable of rendering. The men walk slowly around in a circle while the women, standing some ten yards away, advance to the edge of the circle from time to time and in pairs bend their bodies backwards and forwards, or in threes and fours skip sideways to and fro. From a distance the singing is often harmonious, but when heard at close quarters it is both ear-splitting and appalling to a musical listener.

[534] The singing is accompanied by the beating of the hollowed-out 202 wooden drums (*tui*) with series of short staccato raps from the soft-nosed beaters. These *tui* can be heard for many miles when weather conditions are favourable and are used extensively for signalling. Some of the Buka districts have elaborate *tui* codes, and are able to send detailed messages from village to village. Among the more [763] simplified signals is that denoting a death and is made by ten long beats, pause, three short, pause, three short, pause, five short, pause, five short, pause, and ten long. When a man is annoyed over something (his wife has failed to cook the taro, or a pig has died) and he wishes to "tell the world" he raps out ten long beats, a pause, then another ten long beats. The arrival of a stranger in a village is denoted by three long beats, pause, followed by three series of seven short beats interspersed with pauses. The general call to assemble in a village is three series of three shorts and one long beat.

303 The men usually wear their hair long and combed upright. [346] The hair of a woman is close-cropped, except when she has given birth to a child and then it is allowed to grow long until the child is able to crawl about. The women wear a hood made from pandanus 291 leaves sewn horizontally together, with every other leaf dyed red 386 with the root of a bush. This custom is to prevent certain of their male relatives from seeing their hair, which is taboo. A loin cloth 291 of red or coloured print serves as the general garment for both sexes. 177 A few years ago the women wore a small grass *tahu*, and in former days the men wore no covering.

534 Even to this day the process is similar except that steel chisels and [177] adzes have been brought into play by the experts.

[194] The size of the *tui* varies. On Pororan Island (situated five miles west of the Buka mainland) there are three standard sizes: the *tui*, the *halan* and the *king*. The former measures about eight feet long and four feet high; the *halan*, five feet by two feet, and the *king* three feet by one foot.

The fact that the word *tui* is used for the large drum and *king* for the smaller size prompted me to make searching enquiry as to their etymological origin to see if I might connect them with the Fijian *tui* (king) but, so far as I can gather, the words originated simply from their close resemblance to the sound which both these instruments make.

202 For signalling the *tui* is used exclusively, and one is to be found in every *tsuhan*, or master's house, in the village. The beating is done by hitting the drum sharply, near the top in the centre with [224] the soft-nosed *tsinoi*, or beater, which consists of a number of thick strips of the lawyer vine about six feet in length, bound closely together at the striking end, allowing the other end of the strips to remain loose. These, by a certain twist of the wrist, create a rustling accompaniment to the beats when excitement runs high during a dance. No special men in a village are invested with the privilege of beating a *tui*, though uninitiated boys are not supposed to do so. Women, on the occasion of their own dances, are allowed to beat one.

535 533 During dances (*guma*) the *tui* and *king* are used. The *king* commences and continues with a uniform series of short beats, which attain a higher and more penetrating note than the deep-toned *tui*, even as the word *king* when pronounced sharply. The *tui* beats are varied according to the humour and the ability of the man employed as beater. Usually the beats are:

— — — . . . . . — — — — . . . . . —[1]

Beats continue for a period of from one to two minutes and then *tui* and *king* cease simultaneously, the signal being two or three louder beats made on the *tui*. If the cessation of beats is not simul-

[1] A long beat is represented by a dash; a short one by a dot.

4: Thomas U-5 (no date) 1931 ON6 Buka ON6
Pororan

taneous the dancers and singers show their disapproval by a series of cat-calls and disparaging remarks on the ability of the beaters.

Throughout the main island of Buka and the adjacent islands there is one signal which is commonly known. That is the one announcing the arrival of a stranger or strangers of importance to the village. This signal is called *asosoat*, and is the only signal which is generally adopted. Each district has a code of its own, and these codes seem to be governed according to the distribution of dialectical change.[1]

The Pororan signalling code is limited in comparison with that of the Solos district, where the inhabitants are solely bush natives and have an extensive and detailed code. The chief Pororan signals, made up of *sinak* (long beats) and *hatut* (short beats), consist of:

1. General muster (*ngong-ngok*): ... — ... — ... —
2. Call for the chief (*ngong-ngok*): ——— ... —.——— ... —. — —
3. The arrival of a stranger of importance (*asosoat*): ——— ....
4. A death (*tan ni matano*): ——————————— ... ... ———————————
5. Purchasing a wife when the bride-price, or *tsinahan*, has been paid (*tsinahan*): —— — — — — —. . . . . — . . . . . —— . . . . . — — — —

202 9. General dancing and singing (*guma*).

10. Killing of a captive (man) for food (*kura kura*).

11. Theft (*kope-kope*): — — — — — — — — — — ..

12. To ripen the *wungal* (nut). One is placed in the fire and is followed by: .. .. —

13. To drive away sickness. All men armed with coconut leaves, sticks and spears proceed to the village boundary while the women remain in the houses and each *tui* in the village signals in turn: ..... —

Counting is done by repeating the signal — . — . — (which is shown in the " purchase of a wife " signal to the extent of nine, representing the fathoms of native money paid). In counting food such as taro, coconuts, etc., when numbers exceed ten then the signal is abbreviated to — . — for each item. All counting is done by the one code. When a feast is about to be held natives from neighbouring villages are able to ascertain the number of pigs that have been killed for the feast, and also how far the preparations have progressed in order to time their arrival at the scene of feasting at an opportune moment.

News of importance, *e.g.*, the arrival of a government official, is relayed from village to village. In the Solos district the natives also detail the number of police-boys, carriers and boxes in the party.

202 533 177 In recent years as a result of the influence of the white man, the younger generation who are losing many of the old tribal customs, are inclined to improvise new beats for the dance accompaniments based on the staccato noise of a schooner's auxiliary engine exhaust. This, unfortunately, is but one of the many innovations which are being introduced through white influence, and, in the next decade or so, many of the old-time customs will have disappeared entirely.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE INITIATION CEREMONY OF PORORAN

881 177 The Ndook ceremony for the initiation of youths on Pororan at the present time is similar, in many respects, to that which was performed on full-grown men in the earlier days, though previously greater secrecy was maintained and admission was not granted to every man, but reserved as a mark of merit or honour amongst the

4: Thomas U-5 (no date) 1931 ON6 Buka ON6
Pororan

fighting-men. This change is but another proof of the decadence of old-time customs in Buka.

Initiates of today range from nine to fifteen years of age. They undergo no particular preparation other than strict instructions to do as they are told by the older men. Initiates are called *tseezen*, those already initiated are termed *putz-putzi*, and the chiefs, masters and headmen are known as *muri-na-lium*.

When a meeting of *muri-na-lium* decides to hold a Ndook ceremony (such decision being governed by the number of candidates available) word is sent to all *putz-putzi* one or two months prior to the fixed date. A general meeting is held and ways and means decided upon for obtaining taro; the making of *makot* (scraped taro and coconut oil); the guests to be invited; those *muri-na-lium* who will exhibit totem figures, and the number of *bahuan* figures that will be made. The supplying of pigs is left to one or two of the older chiefs who secretly despatch a third man to the houses of owners of good fat pigs. This man stealthily thrusts a thick stick, used for carrying trussed pigs, through the doors of the pig-owners. This is a direct sign from Ndook that the owner must provide a pig for the spirit. Failure to do so would entail death. Such penalties have been enforced even of late years.

The totem figures are called *malai*, and are representative of either the *kekiliau* (bush fowl) or *naboin* (sea hawk) totems, which are the only two existing in Buka. The figures, carved from soft timber, take the form of a huge bird gaudily painted with native pigments, stencil ink purloined from some neighbouring plantation, or washing blue. They represent the spirit of a deceased chief or headman belonging to the *muri-na-lium* exhibiting the *malai*. Usually four or five *malai* appear at a ceremony from one village.

The *bahuan*, or secondary spirits (considering Ndook as being of the first order), consist of wooden images seven to eight feet high carved also from soft wood (see Plate II, A). They are attached at the base to long sticks which enable them to be lifted by the *putz-putzi*, who are covered with leaves or bushes. The *bahuan* also represent deceased chiefs of the same totem as the *muri-na-lium* exhibiting them. Keen rivalry is evinced in making these carvings. Sometimes the arms, mouth, tongue, penis or hands are manipulated